

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly

FIFTIETH SESSION
Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
36th meeting
held on
Thursday, 16 November 1995
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th MEETING

Chairman Mr. STADTHAGEN (Nicaragua)
(Vice-Chairman)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 95: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION
(continued)

- (a) TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)
- (k) FOOD AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 96: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued)

- (a) IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 95: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION
(continued)

- (f) WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (continued)
- (g) HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (continued)
- (h) BUSINESS AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)
- (i) INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY IN DEVELOPING
COUNTRIES (continued)
- (j) UNITED NATIONS INITIATIVE ON OPPORTUNITY AND PARTICIPATION (continued)
- (k) FOOD AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned within one week of the date of the publication to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/50/SR.36
29 December 1995
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

95-82338 (E)



In the absence of Mr. Petreski, Mr. Stadthagen (Nicaragua),
Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 95: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION
(continued)

(a) TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolutions A/C.2/50/L.17, L.18, L.19 and L.20

1. Mr. MANALO (Philippines) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.17 on international trade and development on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, draft resolutions A/C.2/50/L.18 on economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries A/C.2/50/L.20 on the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.19 on specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries on behalf of the Group of 77, China and the sponsors indicated in the document.

2. Mr. MBATHA (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that it was a great honour for African delegations that the ninth session of UNCTAD was to be held in Africa. The Conference would provide an appropriate forum to address various fundamental issues regarding trade and development which were universal in scope. The SADC countries urged Member States to participate in the Conference at the highest possible level, since its success depended on the commitment and participation of all.

(k) FOOD AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.21

3. Mr. MANALO (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.21 on the World Food Summit.

AGENDA ITEM 96: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.22

4. Mr. MANALO (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.22 on the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, with an oral amendment.

AGENDA ITEM 95: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION
(continued)

- (f) WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/50/399)
- (g) HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/50/330 and Corr.1)
- (h) BUSINESS AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/50/417)
- (i) INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (continued) (A/50/215-S/1995/475, A/50/396, A/50/501)
- (j) UNITED NATIONS INITIATIVE ON OPPORTUNITY AND PARTICIPATION (continued) (A/50/8)
- (k) FOOD AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/C.2/50/8)

5. Mr. TIENDREBEOGO (Burkina Faso) said that development planning should take into account women's economic and social role beginning with the formulation of development policies, in order to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability.

6. Nevertheless, the report of the Secretary-General on effective mobilization and integration of women in development confirmed that, despite that awareness and the recognition of the essential and decisive role of women in the process of sustainable development, discrimination persisted both in the conception of models and in the enjoyment of the fruits of development. That was the root cause of existing imbalances in wages and access to productive employment, as well as of the innumerable obstacles that prevented women's spirit of entrepreneurship from being released.

7. In Burkina Faso, for example, women accounted for over half of the population and the majority of the workforce, but they were ranked lower than men in the basic sectors of education, literacy, vocational training, access to the means of production and enjoyment of the economic benefits they had helped to produce. Moreover, they constituted the core of the national economy through their participation in the informal or non-structured sectors, agriculture, livestock raising, crafts and food production.

8. Although legislation and educational measures adopted in Burkina Faso and its adherence to many international conventions and other instruments were important at face value for the liberation of women, activities to provide training in techniques for starting and running businesses were even more so, and most important were measures aimed at facilitating access to savings and credit, with the basic goal of giving impetus to women's creativity and entrepreneurial spirit.

9. The Fund to Support the Paid Employment of Women, established in 1990 and strengthened financially in 1994 with the support of many national and international partners, was one of the efforts undertaken to combat poverty. It was undeniable that sustainable development would never be achieved without the eradication of poverty through comprehensive strategies coordinated at the

international and national levels. He paid tribute to the high quality of the efforts of the United Nations system in that area.

10. In line with the Copenhagen Programme of Action, Burkina Faso had instituted important practical courses on topics ranging from employment policies for youth to administrative decentralization that could be regarded as examples of cooperation and collaboration, particularly with the United Nations system.

11. Burkina Faso welcomed the proclamation of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, took note of the proposed activities and would work to guarantee its success.

12. Ms. HEYZER (United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)) said that the cost of not investing in women was too high. Societies as a whole suffered major losses when women were poorly educated, in bad health and overworked, when they were excluded from many activities and prevented from participating in decision-making. It was unacceptable that as the twenty-first century approached, women made up 70 per cent of the world's absolute poor and two thirds of the world's illiterate people.

13. Women were currently asking for political will, accountability and resources for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and they wanted the key commitments undertaken by more than 100 countries and United Nations organizations to become realities in their daily lives.

14. Women must have access to economic resources and opportunities so that they could benefit from them on a sustainable basis. The key areas of the work of UNIFEM included globalization and economic reform, concentrating on trade and structural adjustment, sustainable livelihoods with a focus on enterprise development, and natural resource management.

15. In the political sphere the work of UNIFEM would concentrate on strengthening the role of women in governance and decision-making at all levels, human rights and violence against women, peace-building and conflict prevention. After helping women to defend their position effectively in global conferences, UNIFEM in its next phase of work would empower women to participate effectively in the implementation of the outcomes of conferences.

16. UNIFEM looked forward to providing technical support to the Resident Coordinator system, and to bringing country-level experience to bear on relevant aspects of the work of the system at the global level. To that end, UNIFEM would collaborate with Governments in the preparation of national action plans for the implementation and monitoring of the Platform. During the preparation for the Beijing Conference, UNIFEM had built partnerships, mechanisms and processes in several countries which could now be strengthened to assist in the implementation process.

17. However, the full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action would require financial resources. UNIFEM needed to double its current resources, of \$12 million, in order to be able to move forward to the next phase of its work.

18. The Beijing Conference had been a success because Governments, the United Nations system, and women's groups had worked closely together. The momentum which had been built and the partnerships which had been created would be strong forces for achieving the implementation of the Platform. That was a debt owed by the international community to half of humanity and to the next generation, and UNIFEM firmly intended to play its part.

19. Ms. YANG Yanyi (China), referring to the sub-item entitled "Business and Development", said that the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Role of Enterprises in Development, created by UNCTAD, had achieved some results in the exchange of information regarding experience among a number of countries and in the analysis of issues related to the development of business and enterprises. Her delegation hoped that, on the basis of that work, UNCTAD would set priorities to promote enterprise-oriented technical cooperation and networking among national enterprises, and strengthen its multilateral programmes.

20. The State had the ability to create a favourable environment for enterprise development through, among other things, the adoption of measures to maintain macro-economic stability and reduce risks for enterprises; the formulation of rational policies concerning investment flows, productivity, management, environmental consequences and cost-effectiveness; and the provision of financial support.

21. Every country should be allowed to choose its own paths of economic development and forms of enterprise ownership. Since beginning its economic reforms, China had encouraged private individuals to undertake business initiatives and had paid great attention to the role of private enterprises in the economy and in development. Meanwhile, State-owned enterprises had been modernized and technological and management changes had been introduced. Large, medium-sized and small enterprises were currently flourishing in China.

22. Regarding the eradication of poverty, her delegation believed that to attain the goals set out at the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women it would be necessary, first, to accelerate economic development by stimulating production and construction, creating sources of employment, and increasing investment in human resources and in educational opportunities. In that respect the Government had an important role to play in organization, financial assistance and information. Secondly, measures must be adopted to meet the basic needs of the population, to avoid excessive demographic growth and to improve the status of women. Thirdly, all forms of international cooperation must be strengthened in order to translate into action the commitments made at a number of conferences and forums. The developed countries should undertake greater responsibility for the eradication of poverty throughout the world by establishing favourable terms of trade with developing countries, reducing the debt burden, stabilizing the prices of primary products, increasing official development aid and transferring technology. Fourthly, it was necessary to strengthen the coordination of all the activities of the United Nations system in the area of poverty eradication in order to improve the efficiency of international funds and projects.

23. The Chinese Government attached great importance to the eradication of poverty, a problem from which the country had suffered throughout its history.

Since the mid-1980s, a systematic large-scale campaign had been under way, enabling the poor population of the country to be reduced from 250 million to 70 million people, and vigorous measures were being taken to implement a national programme whose final goal was the eradication of absolute poverty by the end of the century. Despite the efforts which had been made China still had the greatest number of poor people in the world. The eradication of poverty among the Chinese people, who accounted for one fifth of the world's population, should be a collective endeavour on the part of the international community. The Chinese Government was ready to increase its cooperation with the United Nations and other international organizations for that purpose.

24. Mr. CHOE Tong U (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), referring to the subject of women in development, said that it was essential that women should enjoy the same rights as men and that they should be able to play an important role in the fields of politics, the economy and culture. The success of the development process depended on the active participation of women.

25. In resolution 42/178 the General Assembly had recommended the intensification of efforts to promote the integration of women in development. The current session should take the necessary practical measures to speed up the implementation of that resolution and of the Beijing Platform for Action. That would require, firstly, the mobilization of the necessary financial resources, which would require the participation of the developed countries and international financial institutions. It was also necessary to enhance the role of the United Nations system in that area. In that regard, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should review the functions of the Commission on the Status of Women to enable the latter to effectively monitor and coordinate the implementation of the Platform for Action.

26. Another challenge facing the international community was to resolve the issue of poverty at the earliest possible date. At the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly his delegation had stressed the urgency of taking measures to resolve the issue of poverty and had emphasized the importance of implementing General Assembly resolution 48/183 in which the Assembly had proclaimed 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. He welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General to prepare the detailed programme for the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty as contained in document A/50/551. All activities to be undertaken on the occasion of the Year should be based on the recommendations of the World Summit for Social Development with regard to the issue of poverty.

27. Mr. PAVLOV (Bulgaria) said that his country's process of transition and structural reforms had been extremely difficult and long. After five years of uncertainty and crisis, the country's economy was beginning to show some signs of recovery. The private sector, which currently accounted for 30 per cent of the gross national product, was very dynamic but was still heavily dependent on changes in the political environment. That sector's rapid expansion and the increase in the number of small and medium-sized enterprises had been the main features of the transition process in Bulgaria.

28. In Bulgaria, the Union for Private Economic Enterprise, which was a free, non-profit association of private companies and one of the most stable,

independent and dynamic forces for the promotion of economic recovery and growth in the country, urged all citizens to make their own decisions as to whether to become entrepreneurs, shareholders or to sell their vouchers. The Union provided consultancy, training and information services and its members based their activities on the principle of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that small and medium-sized enterprises were a key element for economic development.

29. Sustained macroeconomic stabilization depended on the effective restructuring of the enterprise sector. Today, no one in Bulgaria questioned the need to give priority to private companies, especially small ones, because they were more flexible and could adapt more easily and created new jobs. However, Bulgaria was the only country in Eastern Europe which lacked two prerequisites for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, namely, a consistent State policy and an executive State body for promoting the sector.

30. The problems facing the private sector in Bulgaria included: financial difficulties stemming from the lack of access to loans on preferential terms; the lack of an appropriate tax system and relevant legislation; bureaucratic obstacles; the absence of reliable information, consultancy and managerial services; and chaos in the public sector.

31. The private sector was of the view that the authorities must, inter alia, develop the labour market, prevent the formation of monopolies and guarantee free access to markets; provide basic order, strengthen institutions and fight crime; support entrepreneurial initiative, improve management, promote further structural changes, stimulate private investments, and reduce support for old industries with no future and direct investments to the private sector; improve access to credit, diversify sources of financing and take steps to protect businesses. Bulgaria also needed to be genuinely integrated into the European and world communities.

32. His country looked to the West for investments; however, its financial and legal structures were not attractive to potential investors. The Union for Private Economic Enterprise would like a more propitious climate to be created in order to attract both domestic and foreign investments. The current level of foreign investments was disappointing. Bulgaria's transition to a market economy would be impossible without greater foreign investment.

33. The economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations in response to regional crises were causing problems for his country. The private sector in Bulgaria, which had suffered as a result of the negative fallout from sanctions, should receive assistance from United Nations Member States and be allowed to participate in the rehabilitation programme for the former Yugoslavia. The losses suffered by the Bulgarian private sector alone as a result of the sanctions against Yugoslavia were estimated at \$3 billion.

34. He welcomed the leading role of the United Nations in the provision of technical assistance and financial support to promote entrepreneurship.

35. Mr. KARIM (Bangladesh) said he was happy to see that the eradication of poverty had received special attention at recent international conferences such as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development, sometimes referred to as the "Poverty Summit".

36. Developing countries were faced with the problem of increasing poverty at a time of significant reductions in the total net resource flows from the international community. However, official development assistance continued to be the major source of external financing for most developing countries, particularly the least developed countries. Financial assistance on concessional terms could prevent further increases in the debt stocks and debt-servicing burdens of developing countries.

37. There were intricate links between trade, economic growth and poverty eradication. Increased trading opportunity for products from the developing countries could create employment and contribute to income generation. The ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) would focus primarily on the promotion of international trade as an instrument of development in the post-Uruguay Round world. His delegation fully supported UNCTAD, as the sole entity in the United Nations system that dealt with development questions in a comprehensive manner. Given its experience and expertise, UNCTAD played a central role in the formulation of coherent approaches to development problems. It should be given the appropriate resources to be able to play its full role in the coming years.

38. His Government was giving priority to poverty eradication and had adopted far-reaching measures in that regard. Priority attention was being given to the agriculture, health, education and family welfare sectors and, currently, more than 30 per cent of the annual development budget was allocated to the social sectors. Bangladesh's food production had increased from 11 million tons in the early 1970s to nearly 20 million tons in the early 1990s. However, because of natural disasters, drought and desertification, optimum output had not been achieved. The systems of food distribution to the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups had been improved and food-for-work programmes were being implemented. A food security system had also been established to meet emergency needs. The Government was also helping to establish labour-intensive small industries in rural areas and encouraging both private and public efforts to provide credits on concessional terms to landless and marginal farmers. Local non-governmental organizations were providing loans to landless and destitute women in the villages who were self-employed.

39. Another increasingly pronounced phenomenon was the feminization of poverty in developing countries. His Government's development strategy catered to the special needs of women. A food-for-education programme and other incentive measures related to the girl child had been established within the overall framework of promotion of human resources development.

40. Lastly, there was a need to mitigate the impact of the structural adjustment and reform programmes pursued by the Bretton Woods institutions. Inevitably, it was the poorer sections of society which were the most severely

/...

affected by such programmes. His delegation firmly believed that the structural adjustment programmes should be reconsidered taking into account their negative impact on the poor.

41. Mr. ZYOSHINO (Japan) said that his delegation was pleased with the successful outcome of the conferences organized by the United Nations in Copenhagen and Beijing, in which the international community had affirmed its understanding of the important role played by women in development. However, gender issues had been "hidden by the invisible hand", particularly in decision-making and policy formulation, which had led to inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the implementation of policy. In response to that situation, the Beijing Conference had reaffirmed the importance of mainstreaming gender issues in all fields, in the belief that sustainable development could not be achieved without the full participation of women. The measures recommended at the Copenhagen and Beijing Conferences should lead to fundamental change, and must be applied immediately. Among them, the economic empowerment of women should be stressed, covering the questions of entrepreneurship, microeconomic policy-making and development planning, all of which were taken up in the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/399).

42. Primary responsibility for implementing action plans lay with Governments, but the international community must all support countries in their efforts to confront the situation. Japan, for its part, was promoting the integration of women in all aspects of development through the provision of official development assistance focusing on three priority areas: improvement of educational standards, promotion of health care and participation in economic and social activities. The official development assistance which Japan was providing for the implementation of WID-related projects had been increasing steadily in recent years and would continue to increase in the future. In order to promote the participation of women in development, his Government had created funds in UNDP and IFAD, and had contributed \$1 million to each of them; it had also increased its contribution to the United Nations Development Fund for Women, which had totalled \$1.5 million in 1995.

43. His delegation concurred with the view of the Secretary-General in his report (A/50/330) that the United Nations system should continue to move towards greater specificity in its definitions and conceptualization of human resource development as the keystone to empowerment in sustainable social development and that the shift in development paradigms towards people-centred and sustainable development necessitated renewed attention to the social as well as the economic implications of human resource development. Japan, as a country of limited natural resources, had made investment in human resources an important part of its own development process and, through its international development cooperation activities, had advocated that other countries do the same.

44. Referring to the sub-item "Business and development", he said that his Government recognized the important role that development of the business sector played in the overall economic and social development of a developing economy. In order to promote that sector, a Government could take such measures as market liberalization and deregulation, investment promotion, human resources and entrepreneurship development, and the enhancement of economic and social infrastructure. In that respect, his delegation noted the significant

/...

contribution made by United Nations agencies in that area, especially in developing human resources and fostering small and medium-sized enterprises, and welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the issue.

45. On the question of the eradication of poverty, he said that his delegation welcomed the proclamation of 17 October as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and the year 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. It fully supported the ideas presented in Commitment 2 of the Copenhagen Declaration (A/CONF.166/9) and stressed the importance of action by all Member States to address the root causes of poverty and meet people's basic needs. Conditions in developing countries varied, as did the forms that poverty took; his delegation therefore felt that greater emphasis should be placed on a differentiated approach. To that end, it appealed to all developing countries to define and assess the nature of their own poverty before the Decade began so that the international community, and in particular donor countries and the relevant organs of the United Nations system, could support them more effectively in their efforts to overcome poverty.

46. Mr. BALZAN (Malta) said that, five decades after the establishment of the United Nations, the international community was still facing the problem of poverty, which affected one fifth of the total world population, mainly in the developing countries. The eradication of poverty, which required a consolidation of the efforts of all nations, had become an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind.

47. In 1996, proclaimed as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, the world community had to ensure that the awareness generated on that vital issue was translated into effective and concrete measures directed at finding a permanent solution to the problem. In 1996, Governments and the different actors of society should focus their efforts on creating a better economic and social environment and should promote political commitments to mobilize resources for identifying strategies and implementing policies.

48. His delegation welcomed the decision taken by the Administrative Committee on Coordination to establish four groups to help Member States achieve the goals established in the major United Nations conferences held recently. It applauded the role of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

49. Sustainable development, which had gained increasing international endorsement, was the cure for poverty. A long-term approach, entailing the broadest involvement in the promotion of environmentally sustainable and equitable development, should be a primary objective of the Organization, particularly in a year dedicated to the eradication of poverty. In addressing the issues of development, the human dimension must not be lost from sight. The development of human resources should therefore be at the centre of any economic and social policy and should lead to an acceptable degree of economic growth.

50. At the national level, countries adopted approaches that were suited to their own socio-economic environments. Education remained the key element on which effective strategies could be based for implementing policies aimed at enhancing human resource development.

51. It was important to highlight the role of women in the development process: sustainable development could not be achieved without the involvement and integration of more than half the world's population. In Beijing, Governments had expressed their determination to promote people-centred sustainable development through basic education and primary health care for women and girls. The role of women in decision-making and in the management of economic resources, as a necessary tool to ensure sustainable development, should also be encouraged. The time had come for women to participate more effectively in the decision-making process which directly or indirectly affected communities in general, and women in particular, at both the national and community levels.

52. Although the time for reflection was rarely over, it was now up to the international community to live up to its responsibilities with regard to the millions of people still suffering from want, still looking for adequate shelter, still deprived of access to health care and education and still denied their human dignity.

53. Mr. SIMWABA (Togo) said that the 1990s, which had initially inspired hope among developing countries, had thus far been characterized by disenchantment and despair in many of them, especially the least developed countries in Africa. The fact that during the last five years, the elimination of poverty had been one of the priorities of the principal conferences held under United Nations auspices was due to the fact that the problem had become an ethical and universal one. One need only realize that currently, over a billion people were living in that alarming social situation, which was exacerbated by the stagnation and regression of production activities.

54. His delegation had noted with interest the report of the Secretary-General on the item, which set forth the policies and multisectoral strategies formulated by the organizations of the United Nations system on the basis of the Copenhagen consensus. However, it must be remembered that the commitments undertaken by the international community with regard to the strengthening of development had not produced the hoped-for results. That bitter realization should give rise to an objective evaluation of all the multilateral cooperation instruments and should lead to a search for better ways and means of giving a new impetus to that cooperation. The development programme currently being prepared must stress the social and economic development priorities set by the developing countries and must attach particular importance to the methods and approaches adopted with the aim of limiting poverty and making it possible for millions of people to lead decent lives.

55. The developing countries, aware that the elimination of poverty was fundamentally their responsibility, were increasing their efforts to establish social policies which took into account the primary and immediate concerns of their peoples, despite the Draconian nature of the structural adjustment programmes. In Togo, agriculture was being encouraged and given increased emphasis in order to ensure food self-sufficiency, and a broad programme of training and employment was being implemented to ensure that young graduates received appropriate training and found gainful employment. With a view to reducing unemployment and stimulating economic growth, his Government had undertaken numerous projects, including the establishment of a free zone for

industrial exports with the primary goal of stimulating the creation of jobs by setting up numerous factories.

56. The serious problem of poverty could not be solved at the national level owing to its numerous consequences; it required understanding, solidarity and generosity on the part of all those working for progress. For that reason, the international community must increase its participation in the effective implementation of the strategies, policies and programmes of action adopted at the various international conferences and including, among other activities, the mobilization of significant levels of resources. His delegation hoped that consideration of the question of poverty would result in the drafting of recommendations leading to a lasting solution of that serious problem, so as to promote social progress and better living conditions in accordance with the primary goals set forth in the Charter.

57. Mr. HAMAD (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that the elimination of poverty had an important place in the United Nations system, particularly since the World Summit at Copenhagen.

58. At the recent joint meeting of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the theme of "Coordination of the activities of the United Nations system on the eradication of poverty", the members of the two Committees had expressed identical views on the multisectoral dimensions of poverty as a social, economic, cultural and political phenomenon and had agreed to further enhance coordination among United Nations entities with sectoral mandates in order to develop an international strategy to eradicate absolute poverty.

59. He expressed the satisfaction of UNESCO at the development of a number of forms of coordination with its international partners with regard to activities aimed at enhancing social development and, in so doing, eradicating poverty. Particularly noteworthy was the coordination established in connection with "Education for All" with the members of the Jomtien coalition, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Bank), which had the merit of addressing one of the most urgent prerequisites for poverty eradication: access to basic services, including education and the development of human resources. He also noted the cooperation between UNESCO and UNDP in the framework of the Technical Support Services mechanism for poverty eradication. That mechanism had enabled UNESCO to refine its approach and methodology and to develop its institutional capacities through studies of the education/ training/employment paradigm in a number of countries, including Rwanda, Togo, Guinea and Chad.

60. Outside the United Nations system, UNESCO was also endeavouring to mobilize the various components of civil society with a view to alleviating poverty. An outstanding model of such innovative partnership was the cooperation between UNICEF and the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh for the purpose of improving educational opportunities for about 2 million women members of the bank. That pilot financial institution had demonstrated its readiness to participate in a basic education programme directly related to economic activities in Bangladesh and aimed at building the local capacity for the development and delivery of programmes for education and information. UNESCO planned to use that positive

experience to promote similar ventures elsewhere and to serve as a facilitator for the adaptation of the Grameen Bank experience to other Member States.

61. By virtue of its mandate, UNESCO was uniquely positioned to serve as an observatory for the study of the complex cultural and socio-economic phenomenon of poverty. With that in mind, UNESCO had established a Management of Social Transformations Programme (MOST) to act as a clearing-house on policies and strategies for combating marginalization and social exclusion. Of particular policy interest within the framework of MOST was the study of ways in which the process of intensifying globalization and other macro-trends were transforming cities to the increasing exclusion of underprivileged populations. There were a number of policy questions which were pertinent to the nature, causes and consequences of poverty in urban settings and which needed to be carefully studied.

62. UNESCO, which had mobilized all its energy to contribute to the World Summit for Social Development at all its stages, had placed the eradication of poverty at the top of its priority list. Furthermore, it planned to carry out projects aimed at strengthening endogenous capacities with emphasis on the active and voluntary participation of excluded groups such as unemployed, marginalized and poverty-stricken people through empowerment and training programmes in cooperation with non-governmental grass-roots organizations and civil society.

63. Mr. MOJSEVICH (Belarus), referring to the sub-item "Business and development" and describing the process of economic reform in his country, said that the basic element of that process was the promotion of privatization and entrepreneurship in accordance with five priority goals: macroeconomic stabilization and sustainability of the national currency; restructuring of basic sectors of the economy; privatization of a major portion of State property; promotion of long-term domestic and foreign investment; and the smooth integration of the Belarus economy into the world economy.

64. Efforts to promote entrepreneurship at the national level had begun in December 1980 with the establishment of joint ventures, which currently totalled 1,700 and involved companies from 70 countries. In 1982 his country had begun a major reform, the purpose of which was to move from a centrally planned bi-level economy (federal and republic) to a mixed economy with an increasingly prominent role for domestic and international market forces. By the beginning of the 1990s there had been some 700 small and medium-sized foreign enterprises in Belarus, involving nearly 60 States and operating with foreign and mixed capital.

65. Crisis-prevention measures had been adopted to stabilize the exchange rate of the national currency and reduce inflation from the 30 to 40 per cent range to the current 2 to 3 per cent range. Belarus had also increased its exportation and importation levels and had met its debt obligations to multilateral and bilateral lenders.

66. Following a recent review of the priorities of the national structural reform programme by experts from the Bretton Woods institutions, a \$200 million line of credit over a 12-month period had been approved. It was hoped that UNDP

would play the role of catalyst in the execution of the first country programme for Belarus.

67. Foreign investment incentives had been provided, including the strengthening of the national system of guarantees for foreign investment and the elaboration of concrete plans for an economic free zone in his country.

68. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on entrepreneurship and privatization for economic growth and sustainable development (A/50/417), it was the view of his Government that assistance to countries with economies in transition was not fully operational and had not encompassed all the aspects stressed by the General Assembly. There was a clear geographical imbalance in United Nations assistance to promote entrepreneurship and privatization in countries with economies in transition: such assistance was apparently being provided preferentially to the countries of central and eastern Europe and the more advanced Baltic States.

69. The Secretary-General's report failed to provide a broad enough analysis of privatization and administrative deregulation. When those issues were next examined it was to be hoped that particular attention would be paid to the transformation of State monopolies into private monopolies, better wages and salaries for various sectors of the population, business management, stabilization control mechanisms, serious problems related to corruption, tax evasion, use of State and mixed funds for personal purposes and, a question of major significance, State regulation of market forces during the various phases of reform, in accordance with the conditions and various stages of the transition.

70. Mr. AL-THANI (Qatar) said that while the problem of poverty was world-wide, it was more serious in Africa than on any other continent: three quarters of the African States were developing countries which demonstrated the weakest growth rates and were burdened by the decline in commodity prices, the deterioration in the terms of trade, the effect of protectionist measures taken in developed countries, the reduction in official development assistance and, in particular, debt payment and servicing which represented for some countries half of their annual budget and, in the case of most African countries, a third of their export income.

71. Recent major international conferences had made an important contribution to the goal of eradicating poverty. The International Conference on Population and Development had emphasized that poverty was one of the main causes of suffering for individuals and had established a positive correlation between efforts to eradicate poverty and strategies to reduce population growth, stimulate economic development and improve environmental protection. It had also been pointed out that the eradication of poverty was vital to sustainable development and countries had been urged to accord priority to investments in human resources, in particular with regard to individuals who were unable to meet their basic needs.

72. The Fourth World Conference on Women had stressed the need for Governments and the international community to implement strategies to eradicate poverty because of its impact on women. Poverty had been one of the principal topics at

the World Summit for Social Development and the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action proposed the elaboration of national and international strategies based on economic growth and social development in order to put an end to poverty; they also urged countries to draw up national plans which would stimulate employment so that poverty could be eradicated and more attention could be focused on health, education, social services and consolidation of family income.

73. His country was working hard to establish mechanisms to implement the policies adopted and had achieved widespread social development under which all citizens enjoyed decent living conditions and had their basic needs satisfied in the areas of health care, education and social services. One particularly positive feature was the support provided to people in need by social security services. The Department of Social Security and Social Affairs was implementing a programme to raise the level of services in the country.

74. His Government was paying special attention to women by setting up training centres where they could earn diplomas qualifying them for employment in workshops. In addition, the Department of Social Security and Social Affairs was helping women to increase their contribution by setting up workshops for women where training centre graduates had good opportunities of finding work and marketing their products. Suitable housing had also been provided for people with limited incomes.

75. Ms. WONG (Australia) said that the Beijing Conference had been a great success and had recognized that a new kind of partnership based on equality between women and men was a condition for people-centred sustainable development. It was now necessary to ensure the implementation of the results of the Conference and their integration with the results of other recent United Nations world conferences.

76. Her delegation encouraged the United Nations funds and agencies to review and revise policies and procedures to meet the global priorities identified in the Platform for Action, and commended the agencies that had gone to Beijing and had made concrete commitments for programme implementation. The contributions to be made by non-governmental organizations and civil society in the follow-up and implementation of the results of the Conference were also important.

77. Since women living in developing countries experienced the most serious difficulties and disadvantages, her delegation considered that donor countries and agencies should use the Platform for Action as a guide for establishing the priority issues that should be incorporated in the planning and implementation of development assistance activities.

78. In Beijing, her Government had made a commitment to assist Pacific island countries in implementing their priority programmes and commitments made at the Conference. Consultations had already been held with a number of countries of the region, not only with Governments but also with women's groups, non-governmental organizations and community organizations at the national and regional level in order to identify programmes that would meet the priority concerns of women of the Pacific region.

79. Both the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/399) and the Platform of Action of the Beijing Conference drew attention to the lack of explicit consideration of women in policy formulation. The full implementation of the Platform for Action should ensure that women were more fully integrated into policy formulation. It would be helpful to begin by collecting gender-disaggregated data on economic activity and recognize the work of women in the domestic and other unremunerated sectors, which perhaps should be reflected in the satellite accounts of national accounts.

80. Mrs. PRADA de MESA (International Labour Organization) said that the World Summit for Social Development had focused global attention on the need to integrate development strategies and international economic cooperation. The International Labour Organization (ILO) was prepared to reinforce the commitments made at the World Summit, in particular the goal of full employment through its active role in follow-up activities.

81. While global economic growth was a fundamental condition for achieving the goals of full employment and poverty reduction, it was in itself not sufficient. Workers required training and education to adapt to the current labour market. ILO promoted technical programmes for human resources development that introduced new working patterns and skills to disadvantaged workers, as well as policies to create a more flexible work force. In addition, it was necessary to reform certain labour institutions that could handicap efforts to keep up with the rapid changes in technology and adapt to the reality of international economic dependence.

82. The creation of high-quality jobs was a key to the eradication of poverty, and job creation was currently essentially the responsibility of the private sector. That was why any employment policy must involve both employers and workers. The State must guarantee fundamental rights and freedoms and an economic, legal and social framework that promoted enterprise and job creation in equitable conditions. It must associate employers and workers in the decision-making process because their cooperation and their commitment to the objective of full employment were crucial to its survival.

83. However, action at the national level would not be effective unless it was supported by international efforts to create a global economic environment conducive to worldwide employment growth. Macroeconomic, sectoral and social policies must mutually support each other in order to create stable conditions to stimulate enterprise and job creation, promote the proper functioning of the labour market, assist employers and workers in adapting to change and guarantee adequate social protection.

84. ILO was particularly interested in the Copenhagen commitment to full employment, which emphasized the need to establish stronger connections between the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations system. In that regard, ILO had already undertaken several initiatives with the aim of engaging in more frequent dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions.

85. Miss ROYO RUIZ (Panama) said that, while the status of women had generally improved over the past 20 years, women still experienced major inequalities with respect to men. The level of women's participation in the workforce continued to be low. In Latin America, working women accounted for only 34 per cent of the economically active population, including the informal sector of the economy, with unstable remuneration and limited access to the training and technical resources associated with increased productivity. Moreover, working women were highly represented in the service sector and underrepresented in the industrial sector, management and executive positions. The inequality of opportunities affected women's professional and work life in the areas of remuneration, social services and job advancement and promotion.

86. The Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, adopted at the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin American and the Caribbean, held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, stressed the need to introduce the issue of gender into economic development policies in order to ensure the full participation of women in the development process and correct existing imbalances, while the 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development irrefutably demonstrated that the time had come for the full integration of women into the development process, especially in the planning of strategies and the formulation of macroeconomic policies.

87. Much more resources should be allocated to the training of women and the implementation of national policies that supported savings, credit and loans for women. It was also necessary to support micro-enterprises managed by women and facilitate women's inclusion in the formal sector, not only in cities but also in rural areas, and also ensure equality in employment and remuneration.

88. The concept of sustainable development was unthinkable unless societies made sufficient efforts to achieve equal opportunities for women and men in economic activities.

89. Mr. CHIRANOND (Thailand) said that his delegation supported the statement made by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He drew attention to the Secretary-General's report on developing human resources for development (A/50/330), which contained a wealth of facts, useful concepts and relevant experiences from a number of countries. His delegation supported the view expressed in the report that each country must develop its human resources in an integrated manner, and felt that the United Nations system could play an important role in that area.

90. In Thailand rapid urbanization, population growth and increased integration into the global economy had affected the environment, family institutions and traditional values, and had created income disparities. To cope with those challenges, the Government of Thailand had organized a number of meetings, in which all sectors of society had participated, to map out guidelines for the eighth national development plan. At those meetings consensus had been reached that development should focus on human beings as the centre of society and national development. Thus, in the next stage of the national development strategy, human resources development, rather than trade and industry, would be given priority.

91. Thailand adhered to the current concept of national development based on the promotion of education, housing, sanitation, primary health care, safe drinking water, poverty alleviation and eradication, employment opportunities, environmental conservation and the role of women. In addition, Thailand's new development strategy took into account not only the material but also the spiritual well-being of individuals, and incorporated the promotion of family values and Buddhist principles. One of the main objectives of that strategy was to ensure security of life and property and to establish a just social order in which citizens would be able to enjoy their rights and discharge their duties.
92. Since different areas of Thailand were at different levels of development, another main objective of the strategy was improving income distribution, creating employment and basic infrastructure in rural areas, and decentralizing local authority. Educational opportunities would also be expanded in all provinces; the Government had committed \$27 billion to that objective, and underprivileged and low-income students of both sexes would receive assistance to continue their studies.
93. Human resource development, improving the status of women, poverty eradication and the role of the private sector were closely interrelated themes. It was therefore important that Governments should take a multisectorial and multidimensional approach and that United Nations agencies should be better coordinated at the country level in order to accommodate the real needs of developing countries, particularly in eradicating poverty.
94. Thailand's strategy for eradicating poverty had a national component, the objectives of which coincided with those of the development strategy, and an international component, which involved promoting bilateral cooperation with various developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region and in Africa. In 1995 the Government had allocated \$9 million to the Thai International Cooperation Programme. Thailand also contributed \$1 million annually to United Nations trust funds, despite being a developing country with a substantial portion of its population living below the poverty line. It therefore appealed to the industrialized countries to honour their commitment to meet the agreed official development assistance goal. At the same time he thanked the donor countries that had met or exceeded the level of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP).
95. Concerning the role of the private sector in development, he said that his country had always attached great importance to free trade and had given special attention to the private enterprise sector. Currently the Government of Thailand was concentrating on two objectives: reform of a majority of State-owned enterprises and opening up opportunities for the private sector in the delivery of services. Private sector participation from overseas was also encouraged for projects which required large investments and high technology. Small and medium-sized enterprises in particular had been promoted because of their innovative nature and their ability to adapt to the provincial environment.
96. His delegation appreciated the efforts of United Nations specialized agencies to implement at the national level the commitments assumed in the Jakarta Plan of Action and reaffirmed its support for the United Nations

International Development Organization (UNIDO), UNCTAD and UNDP as well as the regional commissions.

97. Mr. SHRESTHA (Nepal) welcomed the decision by the United Nations to observe 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. Needless to say, the greatest victims of poverty were the least developed countries and the land-locked developing countries. Since the fight against poverty had to be waged on various fronts over a long period of time, his delegation urged that the General Assembly should at its fiftieth session declare a decade for the eradication of poverty, beginning in 1997.

98. Most of the population of the least developed countries, in some cases as much as 60 or 70 per cent, lived below the poverty line. To avoid a vicious cycle of poverty, overall economic growth must be ensured in order to guarantee that its benefits spread down to the poorest families in society and income-generating opportunities must be created for the poor.

99. If the development strategy was viable, poverty ratios could be brought down significantly even without spectacular economic growth. Although there was a high degree of uniformity in the approach and content of developing countries' poverty alleviation programmes, the results varied enormously. United Nations bodies and agencies could play an important role, not only in formulating strategies, but also in disseminating information on the experiences of individual countries. That information could be especially important for least developed countries undertaking mid-term evaluations of their programmes, since they could then apply corrective measures.

100. His delegation believed that one effective way of attacking poverty was to encourage small enterprises and micro-enterprises through entrepreneurship-development programmes and micro-financing projects, since that created employment and generated income. Similarly, special attention needed to be given to women, often the most vulnerable members of poor families and the most affected by poverty. Some of the programmes launched in South Asian countries had been successful in providing financing to poor women so that they could improve the situation of their families and raise their own status in society. Such programmes needed to be widened to involve a greater number of women.

101. Poverty alleviation had been one of the priority objectives of all the major conferences held by the United Nations during the preceding five years, especially the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen, the official documents of which reflected the international consensus reached concerning the principles, goals and commitments that should be undertaken to reduce and eradicate poverty. The Copenhagen Declaration in particular stressed the role the international community must play, providing increasing support for the elimination of poverty in the least developed countries. The Eighth Meeting of Heads of State or Government of the countries members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), held at New Delhi in May 1995, had also reaffirmed the Association's commitment to the eradication of poverty in South Asia, preferably by the year 2000, by means of an agenda for action.

102. Miss WAFIK (Egypt) said that in the most recent major international conferences held under United Nations auspices, the accent had been on human development, a concept that differed from the concept of economic development. It was well known that growth rates had had no effect on poverty levels, but had in fact fostered the economic inequality from which many societies suffered. There was abundant evidence that in many cases more importance was attached to the material aspects of development than to its human dimension. Some countries, including Egypt, had made parallel and analogous progress in both those aspects of development. Her delegation had been using the term "sustainable human development" since it had first appeared in a UNDP document. Similarly, despite its reservations as to the methodology used to prepare the Human Development Report each year, Egypt recognized how important the Report was in drawing the attention of the international community to the increasingly important role of changing human development.

103. Her delegation noted with interest the report contained in document A/50/330, which reflected concerns about human resource development. It should be noted that the unemployment rate had increased in many countries despite growth in gross domestic product, suggesting that other forces were at work in the current development model which the developing countries were trying to follow. If those forces were not taken into account when development measures were adopted or policies formulated, they could contribute to even greater inequality in terms of income and access to information, in the developed countries as well as in the developing countries.

104. As Egypt attached great importance to the human aspect of development, it was making considerable investments in the education and health sectors, as shown by the creation of a Ministry of Development Management and a Ministry of Housing and Family Planning, which had not traditionally been included in the Egyptian cabinet. It had also established a social fund with the aim of providing assistance in the area of job creation and vocational retraining, within the framework of economic reforms and structural adjustment programmes.

105. It was no less important to formulate comprehensive and wide-ranging strategies for human resource development that did not neglect the environment, and to consider the cultural factors that contributed to cohesion, stability and balance. To ignore those factors on the path to development led to alienation and social strife, with the inevitable result that development strategies which did not take those factors into account failed to achieve their objective.

106. The strengthening and revitalization of the role of the United Nations in general, and of the programmes and funds responsible for operational activities in particular, were essential to the promotion of human development in developing countries. The latter required that additional financial resources should be made available, especially as the developing countries could not count on any rapid improvement in their situation, given the current trends which characterized the new international economic order and which affected their aspirations for just and sustainable development.

107. The further development of human resources required that government policies should be drawn up and regularly evaluated to ensure they were implemented for the benefit of society as a whole. To that end, it was

necessary to take into account specific socio-economic indicators that reflected local conditions and needs, so as to be able to keep track of the progress made in achieving economic, social and human development.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

108. After making some announcements about the agenda for the next day's meetings, the CHAIRMAN reminded delegations of the need to stay within the agreed time-limits when delivering their statements.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.